



Gaming Safety Tips for Parents

- Before your kids start playing, be sure your computer has an activated security suite: a firewall, anti-spyware software, and anti-virus software.
- Be sure your kids have strong passwords for their gaming accounts. Passwords should be at least eight characters long and contain letters, numbers, and symbols.
- Let your kids know they can come to you if they feel uncomfortable when playing a game.
- Participate in the game with your kids.
- Make sure your kid knows how to block and/or report a cyberbully. Tell them to keep a record of the conversation if they are being harassed and encourage them not to engage the bully.
- Make sure your child's user name does not give away their name, location, gender, age, or any other personal information. (Examples: beach01, book2).
- Make sure your kids use an avatar, not an actual picture of themselves.
- If your kids are playing a game that features live voice chat, make sure they are disguising their voice. If the game does not have this feature, do not let them use voice chat.
- Limit their time playing games.
- Make sure you read and understand the ratings for the games that your children are playing. Some game sites have multiple games with different ratings, so check all of them.
- Keep the computer out in the open so that you can monitor your kids' online activities.
- Make sure your kids know that they may not send out any materials to fellow gamers that contain private information and/or data.
- Use built-in parental controls on your Web browser.
- Don't let your children download anything without your express permission. This includes cheat programs that may claim to help your child perform better in the game, but really could be carrying malware.
- Remember that prohibition won't work. Your children will use computers and games consoles, even if it's at school or at friends' houses. If you talk to your kids about risks and good judgment, they will be able to get a lot more out of the web.

- Learn more at www.staysafeonline.org.